

Senators Flex Legislative Muscle, Override Bryan's Veto of Bill Honoring Former Governor Mapp

Senators override Bryan's veto to honor Mapp with a road renaming and medal, dismissing financial concerns. They also override a veto on a bill imposing criminal penalties for perjury in legislative proceedings, despite due process objections

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Former V.I. Governor Kenneth Mapp, who served from Jan. 2015 to Jan. 2019.

The 35th Legislature flexed its authoritative muscle on Friday evening, overriding Governor Albert Bryan's [veto of Bill 35-0229](#). The legislation in question honors former Governor Kenneth E. Mapp for his many years of service to the Virgin Islands in a tangible way, by renaming a portion of Route 75 on the island of St. Croix in Mr. Mapp's honor. The undertaking is expected

to cost \$45,000. The Virgin Islands Medal of Honor would also be bestowed on the former governor.

Offered by Senator Franklin Johnson, who previously worked closely with Mr. Mapp, the bill [received support from all present legislators](#) when it was introduced, with the exception of Senator Carla Joseph. When the bill moved landed on Governor Bryan's desk however, it was struck down.?

His argument against the proposed legislature was a financial one. "As a Governor I recognize Governor Mapp and his contribution to the Virgin Islands, however by contrast, the Legislature recently chastised the administration for attempting to assist over 100,000 people in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, and I am confident in your support for denying the expenditure of \$45,000 for the commemoration of a single person," he wrote in a letter to Senate President Novelle Francis Jr.

During a press briefing on Monday, Mr. Bryan expanded upon his initial remarks. "No one is asking why a majority Democrat Legislature is passing an honorary road naming and a medal for a non Democratic governor. It would be like President Biden signing on to honor President ...Trump." He continued the comparison. "I fully recognize Mapp's contribution to the Virgin Islands, but it was just kind of strange to me. It would be like us inviting Trump to speak at the DNC convention on next week."

Nevertheless, lawmakers during Friday's session voted to override the governor's veto. Senator Joseph, who had objected to the legislation when it was initially introduced, absented herself from the chamber when the vote was taken. Governor Bryan will now be notified of the Legislature's decision to spend \$45,000 on honoring a former chief executive while the territory continues to battle revenue shortfalls.

Bill 35-0229's veto override was just the first of the evening. Lawmakers also supported Senator Kenneth Gittens who raised a motion to override Governor Bryan's veto of Bill 35-0269, which proposed criminal penalties for [perjury in legislative proceedings](#). Mr. Bryan rejected the measure, citing a lack of due process protections. Instead, the governor suggested amendments to the existing perjury section of the Virgin Islands Criminal Code and recommended that related proceedings be prosecuted by the Department of Justice.?

As she did in the first debate on the bill, Senator Alma Francis-Heyliger disapproved of both the motion and the final vote. Senator Angel Bolques Jr. also voted against the override. Notwithstanding, the majority of lawmakers voted in favor of the legislation and the governor will also be notified of this decision.